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Letter dated 26 April 2002 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

The United Nations Tajikistan Office of Peace-building (UNTOP) was established on 1 June 2000 with the Council's support following the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT). In view of the important and positive role being played by UNTOP, I decided last May to extend the mandate of the Office for a further period of one year, until 1 June 2002, and informed members of the Security Council accordingly.

As contemplated in the Office's terms of reference, UNTOP focused its activities during the past year on the consolidation of peace and national reconciliation; promotion of the rule of law; strengthening of democratic institutions; and support for national capacity-building in the area of human rights. An important priority of UNTOP has been political support for the mobilization of international resources and assistance for national recovery and reconstruction.

During the past year, the Office and my Representative played an important catalytic role in the promotion of national dialogue by organizing a series of Political Discussion Club meetings in 57 districts and towns of Tajikistan. The meetings of the Club became an important political factor, bringing together officials from the central Government, local administrations, representatives of political parties, civil society and mass media, who discussed crucial issues of national reconciliation, security and economic reconstruction. The recommendations worked out within the framework of the Club meetings were brought to the attention of the Government and several of them were implemented.

Given the need for strict adherence to human rights standards to heal the wounds of the civil war in Tajik society, UNTOP, in coordination with local partners, is implementing a programme of action in the field of human rights, which is aimed at the improvement of public education in this area and the building of a national capacity in human rights treaty reporting. The improvement of the human rights situation in the country also requires strengthening of the rule of law. In this regard, the Office is planning to implement several technical assistance projects for training of the local police.

One of the key priorities of the Office during the past year has been the retraining of former combatants, their reintegration into civilian life and the creation of employment opportunities for them. To this end, UNTOP, together with the United Nations country team, has prepared several projects which were presented to the donor community in Tokyo in May 2001. The total amount of pledges came to

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US$ 6 million, with actual contributions covering 80 per cent of the funding needs for UNTOP projects.

In view of the very positive role currently being played by UNTOP, as well as the country's continuing need for support in its peace-building efforts and with the concurrence of the Government of Tajikistan, it is my intention to continue the activities of UNTOP for a further period of one year, until 1 June 2003.

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**